

September 14, 2016

SUBJECT: STAAR Online Administrations Beginning in March 2017

To the District Coordinator Addressed:

The purpose of this email is to provide additional information and guidance related to the changes to the STAAR Online Testing Platform. As explained in TEA's letter to districts dated September 6, 2016, the STAAR Online Testing Platform will include embedded accommodations and other accessibility features beginning with the March 2017 administrations. These enhancements have eliminated the need for separate STAAR A and STAAR L test forms. Therefore, STAAR A and STAAR L will be administered for the last time in December 2016.

The three types of embedded accommodations (i.e., text-to-speech (TTS), language and vocabulary supports, and content supports) as well as the accessibility features (e.g., color overlay, zoom/magnification) in the online version of the STAAR will be comparable to the features included in STAAR A. The online version of the STAAR with language and vocabulary supports and TTS will be comparable to the linguistic accommodations that are included in STAAR L. The enhanced online version of the STAAR, however, is capable of being better tailored to a student's individualized needs. The enhanced STAAR Online Testing Platform will allow the student to receive only the specific embedded accommodations that he or she requires during testing in addition to any of the various built-in accessibility features and preferences that the student chooses to use.

In the case of a student with a disability whose ARD or Section 504 committees selected one or more STAAR A assessments for Spring 2017, the committee will need to update the student's IEP or Section 504 plan so that it reflects each assessment the student will take and describes the specific embedded accommodations and non-embedded accommodations (i.e., supports that are not part of the technology platform) that the student requires during testing. The accessibility features that are available to all students who take the online version of the STAAR need not be listed in a student's IEP or Section 504 plan, unless the student's ARD or Section 504 committee wants to ensure that the student uses a certain feature. A district must determine on a case-by-case basis whether a student's IEP should be revised in an ARD committee meeting or through an agreement to amend the student's IEP.

As in previous years, language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) will continue to make assessment decisions for English language learners in the spring. The *2017 LPAC Decision Making Guide for State Assessments* will be available in December 2016 and will reflect changes associated with the online testing system.

The Student Assessment Division will host a TETN on September 23, 2016, to provide additional information regarding changes to online accommodations for the spring 2017 administration of STAAR.